

INCOMING TELEGRAM

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NO: 462, April 6, 4 p.m.

(1). Evening April 4 at large Hungarian national holiday reception I had extraordinary two hours experience sitting and supping at number one table with Hungarian Minister, Prime Minister Siroky and Soviet Ambassador Bogomolov.

There were many toasts, fortunately in light Hungarian wine, most often proposed by Bogomolov, beginning with one to Hungarian people and Rakosi, then to Siroky and Czechoslovaks, Malenkov and Russia and President Zapotocky, interspersed by personal complimentings. Talk ranged from Hungarian cuisine and Slav folklore to Malenkov overtures and Korea, diplomacy and trials of prime-ministering.

When fifth place made at table for academician Nejedly, Minister Education, I suggested joint toast with him to ending international tensions and peace. Bogomolov amplified: "world peace for all, soundly based and durable", then said "your American people too have many good qualities", so we toasted them.

Then, even more surprisingly, Bogomolov told in complimentary terms of meeting General Eisenhower during war. I added an anecdote. He answered with toast "To your President"; then, as Indian Minister joined us, to Indian people, Nehru and Korean settlement. Roundly applauded folksongs sung by popular artists ended evening; there was no (repeat no) word or sign of mourning for Stalin or Gottwald.

As several our toasts were drunk standing we could not but be cynosure other guests. My Dutch colleague commented afterwards "we have never seen anything like it during my three years in Prague. If Bogomolov's instructions were to lessen tensions and show Czechoslovaks and diplomats he meant it, he certainly succeeded".

(2) I report these various details for they may add up to one straw in wind perhaps blowing similarly other capitals; also because, having but shortly earlier same day pondered "three basic facts" Secretary State's April 3 news conference (Soviet heavily armed totalitarianism, deeply hostile ideology and absence moral inhibitions) I had vivid flash-back to 1941 and similar scene in Rome Japanese Embassy when Ambassador with his

staff

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-2- 462, April 6, 4 p.m., from Praha

// staff entertained US diplomats and pressmen fortnight before Pearl Harbor.

If, however, sun was shining, I felt should try make hay, so in aside to Prime Minister referred our last meeting (Embassy telegram 450, March 30) and said I had telegram from Department authorizing me proceed "concrete" discussion his convenience. He answered not (repeat not) yet ready, then asked "meanwhile what about our airplane; when are you returning it?"

As question was put almost lightly and as of general interest, I turned it in similar vein with Bogomolov interpreting to others at table. To return plane, I said, should not (repeat not) be difficult except perhaps for one thing. I had read in foreign newspaper it was one of several given Czechoslovakia by US Army at end last war. Therefore, it should be overdue for scrapping, though that would hardly be chic thing to do to a present.

If instructions this subject could be sent me before I see Prime Minister again it might be helpful. Air Attache informs me plane is probably one of several bought by Czechoslovaks under surplus property agreement; he is checking with USAFE. If so, Department might wish consider current Czechoslovak default on loan payments (Department's telegram 136, April 1) as perhaps least contentious ground for continuing hold plane "for time being".

WADSWORTH

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